

Islamic Education

its meaning, problems & prospects

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

*Read in the name of your lord, who has created (all that exists).
(Al-Qur'an:96:1, Al-'Alaq)*



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Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	19
Purpose of Creation of Human Beings	22
Definition and Meaning of Islāmic Education	28
Aim of Islāmic Education	29
Problems of Modern Society	30
Problems in Introducing an Islāmic Education System	31
Basis of Islāmic Education	37
Objectives of Islāmic Education	44
Some Practical Steps in the Introduction of an Islāmic Education System	46
Conclusion	52
References	55

→ Foreword ←

Alhamdulillah (praise be to Allāh), our only Creator, Sustainer and Watcher of all our deeds; and peace and blessings of Allāh be upon Muḥammad ﷺ, the final messenger of Allāh and the best example for us to follow.

Thirty-eight years ago, as a young undergraduate student leader, I chanted the slogan: "Establish an Islāmic Education system!" Little did I realise at that time that slogan-mongering, even though useful for drawing attention to the need for Islāmic education, was not the way to establish such a system. Far more than mere slogans is needed to bring about such a system. Which is why even after so many years and despite welcome progress, Islāmic education as I understand it, is far from a living reality.

What then is needed to achieve this system, which would rescue humanity from the moral and spiritual abyss? It would be too simplistic to think that there is an easy answer to this. Education is at the core of any nation's future planning. It sets the tone, temperament and indeed the vision of how a society should grow; how it develops and achieves its material, spiritual and moral needs. This planning requires a thorough knowledge, understanding and the expertise about training and equipping human resources with the know-how and skills to face effectively a whole gamut of life situations, in order to achieve a comfortable and a happy life.

Islāmic education aims at much higher objectives than just the achievement of worldly happiness and comfort. Islāmic education regards human beings not simply as a material resource, but as the agents of the Almighty Creator Who has created them to inhabit this earth temporarily as His obedient and loyal subjects, in transit to a never-ending life which is their final destination. The All-Powerful Creator's flawless grand-design aims at allowing His agents to exercise freedom of choice to obey or disobey Him. He has given them everything they need for their meaningful living on the earth. His master-plan allows for a day of reckoning in the life after death, when all his obedient and loyal servants shall be rewarded with unprecedented eternal bliss, happiness and contentment in the gardens of Heaven, while the disobedient and ungrateful will suffer the torment, pain and punishment in Hell.

Islāmic education will educate, train and equip man, and hone all his faculties to make him his Creator's obedient, faithful and loyal servant who would himself practise the best way (*aṣ-ṣirāṭul mustaqīm*) and exhort his fellow human beings to do the same and keep them away from the bane of Hell, which is the outcome of unbelief and disobedience (*al-kufr* and *aṭ-ṭaghāt*).

Since the creation of Ādam ﷺ as the first man as well as the first prophet of the Creator on earth, human beings have been at odds with their sworn enemy, Iblīs (Satan). Islāmic education equips man with the skills, values and qualities to thwart all the tricks, gimmicks and temptations Iblīs can muster to foil man's efforts to please His Creator. It is an education that develops man's total personality to establish truth and goodness (*al-ma'rūf*) by eradicating falsehood and evil (*al-munkar*). Indeed, Islāmic education trains

and equips us to be in an ever-ready state of alertness to follow the path of the Right and the Light (*al-Ḥaqq* and *an-Nūr*) and keeping away from ignorance and darkness (*al-jāhiliyyah* and *aẓ-ẓulumāt*).

Islāmic education would make the world a better, happier and nicer place to live in peace, tranquility, joy and contentment. This education cannot be established without the political initiative of a freely-elected, Allāh-fearing leadership of a particular country from where it could be emulated throughout the globe in order to usher in an era of real bliss and happiness for all mankind.

The pages that follow have been written to focus on the meaning, need, importance, problems and prospects of establishing such a system. It is heartening to note that things have moved towards a happier direction since my slogan-chanting days in the early sixties. But a whole range of real work remains to be done.

The global Muslim situation of today cannot but bleed the heart of a believer (*mu'min*). Even though Muslims emerged from a colonial past long ago, they are still under the domination of Western thought, technology, culture, civilisation and political hegemony. Put differently, they are under the domination and the glamour of materialism based on the free-market economy and the democratic political order.

We Muslims have to take a careful look at and into ourselves, and conclude that our terribly heartbreaking, sorry state of political, economic and social affairs is the outcome of our own decadence, servility and inaction. We have become talkers, pronouncers and show-offs, rather than doers, performers and the standard-bearers of *taqwā*, the *sine qua non* of Islāmic personality. Western knowledge, science and technology have dazzled and mesmerized us, and we have turned ourselves into imitators, pitiful apologists, compromisers and inventors of mishmash ideas like synthesising Islām with western materialism and the democratic political order.

We should use science and technology for our benefit and must not allow science and technology to control and govern our lives. Allāh has created everything in the universe for the benefit of mankind.

Islām is the final and the ultimate truth. It has to be understood and practised as such; no more or no less. The speeches, talks, writings, seminars, exhibitions, etc. should go side by side, not left out. But the practice (*'amal*) of Islām must predetermine and predominate our pronouncements.

Any synthesis of Islām and unsanitized Western materialistic thought would create *crypto-muttaḳīs*, not the ones intended by the Qur'ān, in my humble and honest understanding. The Allāh-orientated knowledge is the true and beneficial knowledge. All other knowledge must be subservient to the Qur'ān-based knowledge. Attempts to dilute Qur'ānic knowledge with the acquired knowledge must be discarded.

The Qur'ān has clear guidance on accounting, anthropology, biology, botany, business transactions, charitable work; chemistry, cosmology, ecology, economics, education, ethics and morality, geography, history, health and hygiene, international relations, law, mathematics, marine life, medicine, metaphysics, oceanography, physics, social welfare, sociology, warfare, zoology and almost everything concerning every aspect of human life.

If we consider the following pronouncements of the Qur'an, we would conclude that fourteen centuries ago our Almighty Creator provided us with the ultimate truth and guidance which we should have followed to reconstruct and redesign the aforementioned disciplines and others to initiate a comprehensive Islamic education system:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ﴿١﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ﴿٢﴾ اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ
الْأَكْرَمُ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ﴿٥﴾

Read! In the name of your Lord who has created (all that exists),

He has created man from a clot (something that clings).

Read! Your Lord is the Most Generous.

He has taught (the writing) by the pen,

He has taught man what he knew not.

(al-Qur'an, chapter 96, verses 1-5)

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ
سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ
خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا
الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا
ءَاخِرَ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

Indeed, We created man (Ādam) out of an extract of clay (water and earth).

Thereafter We made him (the offspring of Ādam) as a *nutfah* (mixed drops of the male and female sexual discharge and lodged it) in a safe lodging (womb of woman).

Then We made the *nutfah* into a clot (something that clings in the womb),

then the clot into a lump of flesh,

then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones,

then We brought it forth as another creation.

So blessed is Allāh, the Best of Creators.

(al-Qur'an, chapter 23, verses 12-14)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ
بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾

O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord who created you from a single person (Ādam), and from him (Ādam) He created his wife (Hawwā' [Eve]), and from them both He created many men and women; and fear Allāh, through Whom you demand (your mutual rights), and (do not cut the relations of) the wombs (kinship). Surely Allāh is ever an All-Watcher over you.

(al-Qur'an, chapter 4, verse 1)

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَتْهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَى ذَهَابٍ
بِهِ لَقَدِيرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَأَنْشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ نَجِيلٍ وَأَعْنَبٍ
لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ
طُورٍ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالذَّهْنِ وَصَبِغٍ لِّلْأَكْلِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي
الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُّسْقِيكُم مِّمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ
وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

And We sent down from the sky water (rain) in (due) measure, and We gave it lodging in the earth, and verily, We are Able to take it away.

Then We brought forth for you therewith gardens of date-palms and grapes, wherein is much fruit for you, and whereof you eat.

And a tree (olive) that springs forth from Mount Sinai, that grows oil, and (it is a) relish for the eaters.

And Verily! In the cattle there is indeed a lesson for you. We give you to drink (milk) of that which is in their bellies. And there are, in them, numerous (other) benefits for you, and of them you eat.

And on them, and on ships you are carried.

(al-Qur'an, chapter 23, verses 18-22)

الْمَنَجَعِلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾

وَالْجِبَالِ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَخَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا
وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَبَنَيْنَا
فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شَدِيدًا ﴿١١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٤﴾ وَجَنَّاتٍ
أَلْفَافًا ﴿١٥﴾

Have We not made the earth as a bed,

And the mountains as pegs?

And We have created you in pairs (male and female, tall and short,
etc.).

And have made your sleep as a thing for rest.

And have made the night as a covering (through its darkness),

And have made the day for livelihood.

And We have built above you seven strong (heavens),

And have made (therein) a shining lamp (sun).

And have sent down from the rainy clouds abundant water.

That We may produce therewith corn and vegetations,

And gardens of thick growth.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 78, verses 6–16)

يَسْتَلْ أَيَّانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ ﴿٦﴾ فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ﴿٧﴾

وَحَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ﴿٨﴾ وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ﴿٩﴾

He asks: "When will be this Day of Resurrection?"

So, when the sight shall be dazed,

And the moon will be eclipsed,

And the sun and moon will be joined together.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 75, verses 6–9)

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي
يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ
مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ
مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٥﴾

Those who eat Ribā (usury) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of a person beaten by Shaitān (Satan) leading him to insanity. That is because they say: "Trading is only like Ribā (usury)," whereas Allāh has permitted trading and forbidden Ribā (usury). So whosoever receives an admonition from his Lord and stops eating Ribā (usury) shall not be punished for the past; his case is for Allāh (to judge); but whoever returns [to Ribā (usury)], such are the dwellers of the Fire—they will abide therein.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 275)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ
مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ
الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ
وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

O you who believe! Intoxicants (all kinds of alcoholic drinks), gambling, al-Anṣāb, and al-Azlām (arrows for seeking luck or decision) are an abomination of Shaitān's (Satan) handiwork. So avoid (strictly all) that (abomination) in order that you may be successful.

Shaitān (Satan) wants only to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants (alcoholic drinks) and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of Allāh and from aṣ-Ṣalāh (the prayer). So, will you not then abstain?

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 5, verses 90–91)

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾

And observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient.
(al-Qur'ān, chapter 55, verse 9)

إِذَا زُلْزِلَتِ الْأَرْضُ زِلْزَالَهَا ﴿١﴾ وَأَخْرَجَتِ الْأَرْضُ أَثْقَالَهَا ﴿٢﴾

When the earth is shaken with its (final) earthquake.

And when the earth throws out its burdens.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 99, verses 1-2)

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ﴿١﴾

By the heaven, holding the big stars.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 85, verse 1)

وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا

ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ

عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ

الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed). That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

And the moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk.

It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 36, verses 38-40)

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ﴿٥﴾

The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated with measured out stages for each (for reckoning, etc.).

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 55, verse 5)

وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٥﴾

And those in whose wealth there is a recognised right for the beggar who asks, and for the unfortunate who has lost his property and wealth (and his means of living has been straitened).

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 70, verses 24-25)

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الْطَّعَامَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

إِنَّمَا نَطْعِمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ﴿٩﴾

And they give food, in spite of their love for it (or for the love of Him), to the Miskīn (the poor), the orphan and the captive" (saying): "We feed you seeking Allāh's countenance only. We wish no reward, nor thanks from you.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 76, verses 8-9)

فَأَمَّا الْيَتِيمَ فَلَا تَقْهَرْ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلَا تَنْهَرْ ﴿١٠﴾

Therefore, treat not the orphan with oppression.

And repulse not the beggar.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 93, verses 9-10)

أَوْ إِطْعَمٌ فِي يَوْمٍ ذِي مَسْغَبَةٍ ﴿١٤﴾ يَتِيمًا ذَا مَقْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾

أَوْ مِسْكِينًا ذَا مَتْرَبَةٍ ﴿١٦﴾

Or giving food in a day of hunger (famine)

To an orphan near of kin

or to a Miskīn (poor), afflicted with misery.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 90, verses 14-16)

...وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا

عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

... and help one another in al-Birr and at-Taqwā (virtue, righteousness and piety) and do not help one another in sin and transgression.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 5, verse 2)

زَيْنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ
وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ
وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَتَابِ ﴿١٤﴾

Beautiful for men is the love of things they covet; women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of the present world's life; but Allāh has the excellent return (Paradise with flowing rivers, etc.) with Him.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 14)

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا
أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed, a punishment by way of example from Allāh. And Allāh is All-Powerful, All-Wise.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 5, verse 38)

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ يَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ إِنِ شَاءَ
وَيَهَبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ الذُّكُورَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَوْ يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَإِنِ شَاءَ
وَيَجْعَلُ مَن يَشَاءُ عَقِيمًا إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

To Allāh belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He wills. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He wills, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He wills.

Or He bestows both males and females, and He renders barren whom He wills. Verily, He is the All-Knower and is Able to do all things.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 42, verses 49-50)

... وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا
وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَايِبِ
أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا
فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِّنْهُ مَا يَرِيدُ اللَّهُ
لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَٰكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

... if you are in a state of Janāba (i.e. had a sexual discharge), purify yourself (bathe your whole body). But if you are ill or on a journey or any of you comes from answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women (i.e. sexual intercourse) and you find no water, then perform Tayammum with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands. Allāh does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you, and to complete His Favour on you that you may be thankful.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 5, verse 6)

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ
عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ فَاَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ
وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهَرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ
أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is an Adhā (a harmful thing for a husband to have a sexual intercourse with his wife while she is having her menses), therefore keep away from women during menses and go not unto them till they have purified (from menses and have taken a bath). And when they have purified themselves, then go in unto them as Allāh has ordained for you (go in unto them in any manner as long as it is in their vagina). Truly, Allāh loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves (by taking a bath and cleaning and washing thoroughly their private parts, bodies, for their prayers, etc.).

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 222)

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ
وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٨٢﴾

And We send down from the Qur'ān that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe (in Islāmic Monotheism and act on it), and it increases the Zālimūn (polytheists and wrong-doers) nothing but loss.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 17, verse 82)

ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا
يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِّلنَّاسِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

"Then, eat of all fruits, and follow the ways of your Lord made easy (for you)." There comes forth from their bellies, a drink of varying colour wherein is healing for men. Verily, in this is indeed a sign for people who think.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 16, verse 69)

وَيْلٌ لِّلْمُطَفِّفِينَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَكَالُوا عَلَى النَّاسِ يَسْتَوْفُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَإِذَا كَالُوهُمْ أَوْ وَزَنُوهُمْ يُخْسِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

Woe to al-Mutaffifin [those who give less in measure and weight (decrease the rights of others)],

Those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, demand full measure,

And when they have to give by measure or weight to men, give less than due.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 83, verses 1-3)

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ
بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance (justice) that mankind may keep up justice. And We brought forth iron wherein is mighty power (in matters of war), as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allāh may test who it is that will help Him (His religion), and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allāh is All-Strong, All-Mighty.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 57, verse 25)

وَلَقَدْ زَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا رُجُومًا لِّلشَّيَاطِينِ
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابَ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٥﴾

And indeed We have adorned the nearest heaven with lamps, and We have made such lamps (as) missiles to drive away the Shayāṭīn (devils), and have prepared for them the torment of the blazing Fire.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 67, verse 5)

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهَنْ مَقْبُوضَةً
فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فليؤدِّ الَّذِي أُوتِئِنَ أَمْنَتُهُ وَلِيَتَّقِ
اللَّهُ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ
عِندَ اللَّهِ قَلْبُهُ مُّغْلَبٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾

O you who believe! When you contract a debt for a fixed period, write it down. Let a scribe write it down in justice between you. Let not the scribe refuse to write as Allāh has taught him, so let him write. Let him (the debtor) who incurs the liability dictate, and he must fear Allāh, his Lord, and diminish not anything of what he owes. But if the debtor is of poor understanding, or weak, or is unable himself to dictate, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And get two witnesses out of your own men. And if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women, such as you agree for witnesses, so that if one of them (two women) errs, the other can remind her. And the witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (for evidence). You should not become weary to write it (your contract), whether it be small or big, for its fixed term, that is more just with Allāh; more solid as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves, save when it is a present trade which you carry out on the spot among yourselves, then there is no sin on you if you do not write it down. But take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract. Let neither scribe nor witness suffer any harm, but if you do (such harm), it would be wickedness in you. So be afraid of Allāh; and Allāh teaches you. And Allāh is the All-Knower of each and everything.

And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then let there be a pledge taken (mortgaging); then if one of you entrust the other, let the one who is entrusted discharge his trust (faithfully), and let him be afraid of Allāh, his Lord. And conceal not the evidence for he, who hides it, surely his heart is sinful. And Allāh is All-Knower of what you do.

(al-Qur'an, chapter 2, verses 282-283)

The following chapters (sūrah) of the Qur'an deal with human history which, when studied in depth, would give us a vivid description of how nations in the past faced dreadful consequences and were punished by Allāh for their insolence, arrogance, defiance, disbelief and disobedience (al-jahiliyyah, at-taghūt, az-zulāmat): Yūnus, Hūd, Yūsuf, Ibrāhīm, al-Hijr, al-Kahf, al-Anbiyā', al-Qaṣaṣ, adh-Dhāriyāt and Nūh.

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ
كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ
الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلِيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا
فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ
أَنْ يُمْلِلَ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ
مِنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَّمْ يَكُنَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ
مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ
إِحْدَاهُمَا الْآخَرَىٰ وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْمَعُوا
أَنْ تَكْتُمُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ
تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ
أَلَّا تَكْتُمُوهُمَا وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ
وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُقُومٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا
اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٢﴾

Some of the Qur'ānic verses that have been quoted in this small treatise provide amazingly clear evidence that fourteen centuries ago Almighty Allāh gave guidance on all aspects of human enquiry. Indeed, a lot of knowledge remains unknown to mankind even today:

وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٥﴾

“... And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.”

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 17, verse 85)

In the context of Islāmic education I cannot overemphasise the importance of the three T's: Text books, Teacher-training and Teachers. These three are integrally related to one another. Unless we can make substantial progress in these three areas, the Islāmic education I envisage will remain a dream rather than a reality. The task is stupendous indeed—but not impossible.

I implore, beg, crave and beseech my Most Merciful, Most Kind, All-Wise and All-Powerful Creator to make Islāmic education a living reality in all Muslim countries from where the beacon of the Truth and the Light would enlighten the whole globe, which has been transformed into a technological village by the advancement of human acquired knowledge. This acquired knowledge has to be brought under the domain of the only flawless and all-pervasive revealed knowledge of the All-Wise, All-Knowing Creator—Allāh (God). The essence of this revealed knowledge (*waḥī*-based knowledge) is the belief in the uniqueness of the Creator (*Tawḥīd*), His messengership (*Risālah*) and the life after death (*Ākhirah*). The complete revealed knowledge is contained in the Noble and Glorious Qur'ān, which is the final book of guidance for the whole of mankind until the end of this world. The last and the final bearer of this complete and wholesome beneficial knowledge is Muḥammad ﷺ, son of 'Abdullāh, the example par excellence for all human kind to emulate and follow. The Islāmic state of Madīnah, established between 622 CE and 632 CE by Muḥammad ﷺ, and kept up by four rightly-guided caliphs (*al-Khulafā'ur Rāshidūn*) is the basis of setting up an Islāmic education system.

May the Almighty make Islāmic education a reality to prevail and flourish in all parts of His kingdom. May He accept my humble effort and grant me His pardon, blessings and mercy in this world and in the *Ākhirah*. *Āmīn*.

London
Shawwāl 1421 AH
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Ghulam Sarwar

➤ Introduction ◀

The need for an Islāmic education system is not only a matter of conviction, but also crucial for mankind. No other system can save human beings from destruction and perdition, apparent to anyone with insight into and concern for human welfare. On such a system depends the future well-being of all peoples of the world.

Establishing an Islāmic education system in the modern world may seem idealistic, the impractical and unachievable dream of Muslims to revive the Islāmic glory of the period between the seventh and thirteenth centuries. The inherent problems are profound and complex, yet despite this we must work towards the establishment of such a system.

The choice is between surviving as human beings (rather than human-like animals) with purpose, honour and dignity, or to perish in humiliation and utter despair. The man-made education system with its apparent material success has led to many forms of social degeneration: misuse of human intellect and creativity to suit political and economic objectives; abuse of drugs, power, authority and wealth; increased murder and crime; and self-abasement through suicide and euthanasia. The race for the acquisition of nuclear and other weapons, the hoarding and wilful destruction of food (whilst millions starve across the world), discrimination based on race, colour, sex and religion, and attempts to legitimise and even celebrate unnatural acts (sodomy, homosexuality, sado-masochism, etc.) are further instances of our moral decline. Corruption and greed, poverty and lack of basic amenities, and limitations on freedom of expression, even in Muslim countries, make the situation look even bleaker. Wars, genocide, persecution and torture continue even today; whilst the most developed countries supply arms, tacitly supporting abuses of human rights, condemning or acquiescing in an appalling show of double-standards, dictated by political and economic expediency without any consideration of moral and ethical concerns.

It is clearly logical and preferable to argue for a system based on the Creator's revealed guidance which is the basis for the ultimate success of mankind. The guidance was propagated by divinely inspired messengers, and was applied with great success in seventh century Arabia and the adjoining lands of what is now known as the Middle East.

Why did this ideal system not continue? It is the folly of man that he disobeys his omnipotent and omniscient Creator.

كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ ﴿٦﴾ أَنْ رَأَاهُ مُسْتَغْنًى ﴿٧﴾

Nay! Verily, man does transgress all bounds,
because he considers himself self-sufficient.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 96, verses 6–7)

He has misused the Creator's unique gift of freedom of choice. The tricks and temptations of the Devil (*Iblīs*)—the epitome of arrogance and disobedience—only exacerbate this unfortunate situation.

أَسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ
وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

... "Prostrate yourselves before Ādam." And they prostrated except Iblīs, he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 34)

The Creator has given human beings free will to affirm or deny Him, in order to test their faith. Human beings are thus responsible for their actions and will be held to account by the Creator. His gift of freedom of choice is a sign of His munificence and supreme power.

The All-Powerful Creator, in His infinite mercy, sent His final messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ—the last in a chain of about 124,000 prophets (including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Moses and Jesus)—as an excellent example for all mankind. The success of mankind depends on voluntary, conscious and complete submission to the Creator, based on this example.

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولٌ... ﴿٤٧﴾

And for every nation there is a messenger...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 10, verse 47)

...إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ ﴿٧﴾

... You are only a warner, and for every people there is a guide.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 13, verse 7)

وَلَقَدْ بَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ رَّسُولًا
أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاجْتَنِبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ... ﴿٣٦﴾

And verily, We have sent among every nation a messenger, (proclaiming), "Serve Allāh, and avoid ṭāghūt (false objects of worship)"...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 16, verse 36)

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

And We have not sent you (O Muḥammad), except as a mercy to the worlds.
(al-Qur'ān, chapter 21, verse 107)

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ... ﴿٢١﴾

Indeed in the messenger of Allāh you have an excellent example...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 33, verse 21)

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

And surely you (O Muḥammad) are on an exalted standard of character.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 68, verse 4)

Islām is the best way of life, originating from the transcendent and unique reality, Allāh (God)—the Creator. However, many non-Muslims regard it as a restrictive faith promoting rigid laws and patriarchy; they scorn it and its adherents at every opportunity. This may be because of an unwillingness to understand, or because of age-old prejudices dating from the crusades of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries, reinforced by daily misrepresentations in the Western media; it may even be due to perceptions of modern Muslim countries. The ignorance, prejudice, misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Islām are unacceptable in a world where information can be obtained in seconds thanks to advances in technology. This prejudice and resulting injustice should be addressed objectively.

The absence of a model Islāmic education system in any Muslim country has added to the problem. Had there been one, it would have served as an example attracting students from all over the world for its excellence in learning, character building and benefit to mankind. For the time being it remains a dream due to the lack of a proper programme of action or the expertise and political will to change, and due to excessive dependence on the Western system. Most importantly, Muslims today are greatly lacking in strong faith in Allāh, faith that characterised their predecessors in the seventh century CE. The situation will only change when Muslims realise their mistakes and revive their faith, courage and determination. Allāh's blessings, mercy and unlimited favour will help the dream to become a reality when a group of His slaves decides to work towards this. Allāh does not change the condition of people until they first change themselves.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ... ﴿١١﴾

... Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 13, verse 11)

Most Muslim countries follow the Western secular education system; Muslim students from all over the world have for many decades been going to modern centres of learning, e.g. Oxford, Cambridge, The Sorbonne, Harvard, etc. This contrasts with Islām's period of glory from the seventh to the thirteenth century, when students from the then known parts of the world used to go to Madīnah, Damascus, Baghdād, Al-Azhar (Cairo), Alexandria, Qairanwān, Tunis, Fez and Qurṭubah (Cordoba) for the best education.

When discussing the introduction of an Islāmic education system, it is important to compare it with the current system, based mainly on:

- the sovereignty of man and superiority of his reason;
- knowledge acquired by human reasoning and experience;
- unlimited freedom of thought and expression;
- unwillingness to accept anything supernatural;
- individualism, relativism and materialism.

This system has contributed to man's tremendous progress in science, technology, knowledge and experience. It has enabled man to benefit from many of nature's resources. But though man has learnt to fly the skies, cross rivers and oceans, climb hills and mountains, and travel through space, he has lost himself; his bestiality has overtaken his humanity, beauty and, above all, purpose of existence—faith in the All-Powerful, All-Knowing Creator. Despite its material achievements, the system has produced the terrible scenario mentioned earlier; it has debased human beings.

Attempts to improve the existing system will continue to result in failure, for as long as man does not surrender himself to the unique and transcendent Creator, there will be no escaping the disastrous consequences of disobeying Him.

The only solution is to build on the legacy and achievements of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, who demonstrated superbly by his excellent example the efficacy of the Islāmic way of life.

→ Purpose of Creation of Human Beings ←

A thoughtful and careful look at everything around us should prove convincingly that the universe, with all its creatures, wonders, splendours and mysteries, has a Creator Who, with His unlimited powers, is immaculately and flawlessly controlling it with a definite purpose.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا

مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ
بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَتِلِّقُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth,
and in the alternation of the night and the day,
and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind,
and the rain which Allāh sends down from the sky
and makes the earth alive therewith after its death,
and the moving creatures of all kinds that He scatters therein,
and in the veering of the winds and the clouds
which are held between the sky and the earth,
are indeed signs for people of understanding.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 164)

﴿١٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا
بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ
﴿١٦٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ
قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ
خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنَ طَلْعِهَا
قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا
وغيرَ مُشْتَبِهٍ انْظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لِكُمْ
لَايَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

And it is He Who has set the stars for you so that you may guide your course
with their help through the darkness of the land and the sea.

We have explained in detail Our signs for people who know.

*And it is He Who has created you from a single person,
and has given you a place of residing and storage.*

*Indeed We have explained in detail Our Revelations
for people who understand.*

*It is He Who sends down rain from the sky,
and with it We bring forth vegetation of all kinds,
and out of it We bring forth green stalks,
from which We bring forth thick clustered grain.*

*And from the date-palm,
from its emerging fruit are clusters of dates hanging low and near,
and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates,
each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety and taste).*

Look at their fruits when they begin to bear, and the ripeness thereof.

Indeed, in these things are signs for people who believe.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 6, verses 97-99)

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِعَيْنِ (١٦)

*And We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is
between in play.*

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 21, verse 16)

نَبَارِكُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ

فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا (٦١) وَهُوَ
الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنۢ أَرَادَ أَن يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ

شُكُورًا (٦٢)

*Blessed is He Who has placed in the heaven big stars,
and has placed therein a great lamp (sun) and a luminous moon.*

*And He it is Who has put the night and the day in succession,
for such who desires to remember or desires to show his gratitude.*

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 25, verses 61-62)

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِعَيْنِ (٣٨)

مَا خَلَقْنَاهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٣٩)

*And We created not the heavens and the earth,
and all that is between them, for mere play*

We created them not except with truth, but most of them know not.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 44, verses 38-39)

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (١) الَّذِي خَلَقَ

الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ (٢)

الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن

تَفَوُّتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ (٣)

*Blessed is He in Whose Hand is the dominion,
and He is able to do all things.*

*Who has created death and life,
that He may test you which of you is best in deed;
and He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.*

*Who has created the seven heavens one above another.
You can see no fault in the creation of the Most Merciful.
Then look again: do you see any rifts?*

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 67, verses 1-3)

This Creator and Controller is Allāh, the All-Knowing, All-Wise and All-Powerful.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ

الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا

فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ

أَيَّدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلَفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا
شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا
وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾

Allāh! There is no god but Him, the Ever-living,
the One Who Sustains and Protects all that exists.
Neither slumber nor sleep overtake Him.
To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and on the earth.
Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His permission?
He knows what happens to them (His creatures) in this world,
and what will happen to them in the Hereafter.
And they will never compass anything of His knowledge
except that which He wills.
His Kursī extends over the heavens and the earth,
and He feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them.
And He is the Most High, the Most Great.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 255)

He has created the universe and everything in it for the benefit and use of man—the
most important of all creatures.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً... ﴿٢٠﴾

Do you not see that Allāh has made subject to you
whatever in the heavens and in the earth,
and has completed and perfected upon you His favours,
(both) apparent and hidden?...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 31, verse 20)

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

And He has subjected to you
all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth;
it is all as a favour and kindness from Him.
Indeed, in it are signs for a people who think deeply.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 45, verse 13)

The purpose of the creation of human beings is obedience to Allāh's commandments
and wishes ('Ibādah).

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 51, verse 56)

This obedience aims to ensure peace and well-being in society, without prohibiting
use of human intellect and free will which should be applied to fulfil the purpose of
creation and to promote human welfare.

Human beings are the agents of Allāh (Khalīfatullāh) on the Earth.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً... ﴿٣٠﴾

And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: "Indeed, I will make
upon the earth a khalīfah." ...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 30)

An agent, by its very nature, has to behave in exact accordance with the wishes of the
Creator to fulfil the purpose of its creation. The agent must, therefore, be taught how to
achieve this purpose. Allāh has taken this responsibility upon Himself and taught His
agents about how to conduct their affairs on this Earth. Ādam, the first man and a
prophet of Allāh, and his wife, Hawwā' (Eve), were blessed with knowledge given by the
Creator Himself.

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا... ﴿٣١﴾

And He taught Ādam all the names (of everything); ...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 31)

فَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

Then Ādam received from his Lord Words, and He accepted his repentance;
indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Most Kind.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 37)

We can thus say that education followed man's creation almost immediately. Read (*Iqra'*) is the first revealed word in the Qur'ān, the final guidance from Allāh for mankind. According to a saying of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, seeking knowledge is an obligation on every Muslim, male and female.

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim (male and female)." (Ibn Mājah)

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "He who treads the path in search of knowledge, Allah will make that path easy, leading to Heaven for him and those persons who assemble in one of the houses of Allāh (mosques), recite the Book of Allāh and learn and teach the Qur'ān (among themselves). There will descend upon them tranquillity, mercy will cover them, the angels will surround them and Allāh will mention them in the presence of those near Him." (Muslim)

Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: "If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allāh will cause him to travel on one of the roads of Paradise. The angels will lower their wings in their great pleasure with one who seeks knowledge, the inhabitants of the Heavens and the Earth and the fish in the deep waters will ask forgiveness for the learned man. The superiority of the learned man over the devout is like that of the moon, on the night when it is full, over the rest of the stars. The learned are the heirs of the Prophets, and the Prophets leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge, and he who takes it takes an abundant portion." (Abū Dāwūd)

This underlines the crucial importance of education.

➤ Definition and Meaning of Islāmic Education ◀

Islāmic education prepares the agent to carry out successfully his obligations. Without this education, obedience to Allāh's commands and acting as a good agent of Allāh is impossible.

We can define Islāmic education, then, as the process through which human beings are trained and prepared in a concerted way to do their Creator's bidding in this life (*Dunya*) to be rewarded in the life after death (*Ākhirah*). It is important to note that the Islāmic view of life is holistic, and rejects any separation between this life, which ends with death, and the eternal life that begins after death. In Islām, mundane, empirical, metaphysical and spiritual matters are interconnected and inseparable. Thus an Islāmic education system prepares human beings for both life on this Earth and the life after death.

Conversely, the present-day education system is, for all practical purposes, based on a materialistic philosophy of life, limited to this life only. It is concerned with the process of preparing children to succeed materially. It deals mainly with mundane affairs, ignoring metaphysical concepts like life after death, Heaven and Hell. In this system, discussion of the accountability of human actions to the Creator Who rewards and punishes with Heaven and Hell, is conducted in an atmosphere of uncertainty, doubt, confusion and lack of objectivity.

"Education should aim at the balanced growth of the total personality of Man through the training of Man's spirit, intellect, the rational self, feelings and bodily senses. Education should therefore cater for the growth of man in all its aspects: spiritual, intellectual, imaginative, physical, scientific, linguistic, both individually and collectively, and motivate all these aspects towards goodness and the attainment of perfection. The ultimate aim of Muslim Education lies in the realisation of complete submission to Allāh on the level of the individual, the community and humanity at large."¹

"The balanced growth of the total personality of man" cannot be ensured by any system other than the Islāmic education system. The modern secular education system's entire emphasis is on economic growth, the material well-being of the individual and of the society. Children are expected to be prepared, trained and motivated to find their own place in adult life using the skills developed during their education. They are not motivated to pursue the sublime virtues of honesty, decency, truthfulness, justice, fair play, sacrifice, care and concern for the needy and vulnerable, accountability and responsibility. The modern education system hones the worldly instincts of human beings to compete with ferocity in a materialistic world. 'Survival of the fittest' seems to be the norm, despite talk of moral and spiritual development and other finer values of life. Unlimited freedom of inquiry and doubting axiomatic truths are the *sine qua non* of the modern education system. The aim appears to be to produce worldly-wise people uninhibited by principles, rather than decent and responsible human beings with honesty, integrity and a consciousness of the higher values of life. The practice of relativism rather than faith in absolute values has become the trend, epitomised in the 'situation ethics' of the Humanists. This almost all-pervasive relativism has destroyed the basis of higher human values and universalism. Faith in an omniscient Creator, which brings a sense of responsibility, accountability, morality, honesty and decency has become a matter of individual taste and interpretation based on trends and circumstances.

➤ Aim of Islāmic Education ◀

The aim of Islāmic education is to initiate total change in a person—beliefs, actions, potential, faculties, thoughts, expressions, aspirations, energies and everything relating to

that person; in other words, the balanced development of the whole personality of a human being—the agent of Allāh. It seeks to motivate every member of society to promote and encourage everything good (right) and discourage and forbid evil (wrong). Islāmic education should facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills and virtues to achieve success and happiness not only in this life but also in the *Ākhirah*, by the mercy and blessings of Allāh. This aim must be known to all involved in education at every level.

Hundreds of thousands of such people—practising Muslims, whose words and deeds were consistent—were inspired by the greatest teacher of mankind, Muḥammad ﷺ, the final messenger of Allāh, during his messengership in Arabia between 611–632 CE. These balanced human personalities came both from very humble origins and the highest strata of pre-Islāmic society. They included traders, slaves, labourers, delinquents, adulterers, and leading personalities, both local and foreign, for example: Khadijah bint Khuwailid (555–619 CE), Abū Bakr bin Abī Quḥāfah (d. 634 CE), ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 644 CE), ‘Uthmān bin ‘Affān (d. 656 CE), ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (d. 660 CE), Abū ‘Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ (d. 639 CE), Khālīd bin al-Walīd (d. 643 CE), Abū Sufyān bin Ḥarb (d. 652 CE), Bilāl bin Rabāḥ (d. 641 CE), Fātimah bint Muḥammad (d. 632 CE), ‘Ā’ishah bint Abī Bakr (613–678 CE), Khabbāb bin al-Aratt (d. c. 658 CE), Sumaiyah bint Khubbāt (d. c. 622 CE), Salmān al-Fārisī (d. 657 CE), Hamzah bin ‘Abdīl Muṭṭalib (d. 625 CE), al-‘Abbās bin ‘Abdīl Muṭṭalib (d. 653 CE) and Usāmah bin Zaid (614–674 CE), ﷺ; some of the early Muslims from a list of many. Such people, by the strength of their faith, brought the Persian and Byzantine empires to heel in the seventh century.

Efforts to Islāmise society should continue simultaneously with efforts to Islāmise knowledge and the introduction of the Islāmic education system. Islāmisation of society cannot be achieved until knowledge is Islāmised on the basis of the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. Only an Islāmised education system can ensure the survival and progress of Islāmic societies. The introduction of an Islāmic education system should be an integral part of the efforts worldwide to establish Islām as an all-encompassing way of life.

→ Problems of Modern Society ←

Spiritual and moral issues and development are discussed infrequently in the realm of education, despite social problems such as drug abuse, violence, HIV and AIDS, unmarried mothers, rape, break-up of family life, increase in crime (even vicious attacks on old and vulnerable people by juvenile delinquents, often for only paltry sums of money). Efforts to date have been cosmetic, superficial and ineffective, and cannot be expected to cure deep-rooted problems and produce miraculous results. The solutions to these social problems require acceptance of divine guidance as the basis of our education system. The basic element of the divine guidance (*al-Hidayah*) is a belief that the All-Knowing Creator is the Law-Giver, and that this All-Wise Creator is actively conducting every

affair of His Kingdom—the Universe. He guides His worshippers through His prophets and messengers and His revealed Books (*Risālah*). He is the Guide and He will take a full account from His agents of the affairs of their lives on this Earth on the Day of Judgement (*Yawmuddīn*). Belief in the *Ākhirah*, where every human being must account for their own actions on this Earth, should bring about a tremendous and revolutionary change in the attitudes and conduct of people, as it did in the past.

It is vital that we mould our education system on these fundamental beliefs (*Tawḥīd*, *Risālah* and *Ākhirah*). This outlook pervades all aspects of our life—social, economic, political, physical, emotional, spiritual, national and international. We should not prolong our predicament by continuing to pursue an almost belief-free and value-free education system. Our education system must be heavily faith-laden and value-laden. No learning is meaningful without a belief in its usefulness and no education is beneficial if it does not transmit and promote deeply cherished values of honesty, integrity, selflessness, concern for social welfare and a strong sense of responsibility and service to others. Though the present education system aims to inculcate these values, such an aim is incompatible with the predominating materialistic outlook on life; thus it cannot be achieved through this system.

→ Problems in Introducing an Islāmic Education System ←

The introduction of an education system based on Islām should not be regarded as the revival of fundamentalism and the curtailment of human freedom of thought and action, nor should it be seen as backward and regressive. The only way forward is to follow consciously and meticulously the way the Creator has ordained for us. He declares in His final book of Guidance (the Qur’ān):

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ... ﴿١٩﴾

Indeed, the Religion in the sight of Allāh is Islām....

(al-Qur’ān, chapter 3, verse 19)

...الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا... ﴿٣﴾

... This day I have perfected your religion for you,
completed My favour upon you,
and have chosen for you Islām as your religion....

(al-Qur’ān, chapter 5, verse 3)

Contrary to popular Western understanding, Islām did not begin with Muḥammad ﷺ, but began with Ādam, the first man and a prophet of Allāh. This system or way is the most enlightened, practised over many millennia by the messengers of Allāh, and is the surest method of success. It succeeded for many centuries and must succeed now, *inshā'Allāh* (if Allāh wills). It needs determination to work towards this.

The Qur'ān exhorts us to prepare ourselves and our children as the 'best of peoples' (*Khair Ummah*) to establish good (*Ma'rūf*) in and to eradicate evil (*Munkar*) from society.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ...

You are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind;
you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong,
and you believe in Allāh....

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 110)

This duty is universal and must be acted upon for the benefit of human kind. This aim could be shared by the followers of all religions. Who in their right frame of mind would object to the proliferation of good and the non-proliferation of evil? Everyone, with faith or without faith, should be able to accept this universal message of promoting right and discouraging wrong. Of course, there are varying opinions among people of other faiths, atheists and agnostics about what is right or wrong.

We have been endowed with free will by Allāh, and to test us He has created our base desires and instincts. Also, He created the Devil, and allowed him to distract us from the obedience and loyalty to our Creator.

وَمَا أَكْفَرُ نَفْسِي إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ...

"And I free not myself (from the blame).
Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil..."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 12, verse 53)

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا
تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ

"Did I not ordain for you, O children of Ādam,
that you should not worship Satan.
Indeed, he is a clear enemy to you."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 36, verse 60)

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ
الَّذِي يُوسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ

"From the evil of the retreating whisperer,
who whispers into the breasts of mankind."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 114, verses 4-5)

Thus we are beset with baffling, complex problems for which solutions must be found in order to discharge our duty as the agents of Allāh on Earth.

The problems we face in working towards an Islāmic education system are:

- Unwillingness to accept Allāh as the only Creator and Guide Whose law is the best and universal.
- Unwillingness of people in authority to accept the final messenger of Allāh—Muḥammad ﷺ—as the best example (role model) for all mankind.
- Absence of belief in the metaphysical, e.g. uniqueness of the Creator (*Tawḥīd*), life after death (*Ākhirah*), Heaven (*Jannah*) and Hell (*Jahannam*).
- Widespread ignorance about the beliefs and teachings of Islām amongst the thinkers, social planners and leaders of other faiths and of no faith.
- Absence of an example to follow in any part of the world, even in Muslim countries.
- Presence of a bifurcated education system in most Muslim countries; juxtaposition of secular educational institutions and religious institutions.
- Almost total absence of graded textbooks (revised and corrected to reflect Islāmic beliefs and teachings based on the Qur'ān and the Sunnah) in all disciplines and fields of human enquiry.
- Confusing an all-encompassing Islāmic education system with a theological education system which deals only with beliefs, traditions and the moral and spiritual aspects of life, removed from any connection with the needs of the material world.
- Influence of philosophies and thoughts not based on the Islāmic view of life and the world (e.g. scholasticism, humanism, materialism, nationalism, positivism, relativism, individualism, scientism, existentialism, etc.).
- Lack of political will on the part of governments to adopt and implement Islāmic education systems with all its ramifications.

Given the determination, no problem is insurmountable. A beginning has to be made, depending completely on the mercy and blessings of our all-powerful and all-knowing Creator, Who creates anything by a command of one Arabic word "*Kun*" (Be) and it is there.

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

The Originator of the heavens and the earth.
When He decrees a matter,
He only says to it, "Be!" and it is.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 117)

... إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾

... When He has decreed something, He says to it only, 'Be!' and it is"

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 47)

إِنَّمَا قَوْلُنَا لِشَيْءٍ إِذَا أَرَدْنَاهُ أَنْ نَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٨﴾

Indeed, Our Word to a thing when We intend it, is only that We say to it, 'Be!' and it is.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 16, verse 40)

... إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٣٥﴾

... When He decrees a thing, He only says to it, 'Be!' and it is.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 19, verse 35)

إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٨٢﴾

Indeed, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it 'Be!' and it is.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 36, verse 82)

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا

قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٦٨﴾

He it is Who gives life and causes death.

And when He decides upon a thing, He says to it only, 'Be!' and it is.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 40, verse 68)

The Creator has created us to work towards the fulfilment of His wishes. He has the power to change and establish anything when He wills to, but He has left it to human beings to bring about the changes.

Present day Muslims seem keen to talk and write about the beauty, superiority and efficacy of Islām, but are noticeably slack in practising it. The need is to practice Islām, complemented by speeches, writings, and conferences, etc. Allāh warns us very sternly in the Qur'ān about inconsistencies between our words and actions.

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ

وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

Do you enjoin righteousness on the people,
and forget (to practise it) yourselves,
and you recite the Scripture?
Have you then no sense?

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 44)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢﴾

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

O you who believe!
Why do you say that which you do not do?
Most hateful is it in the Sight of Allāh
that you say that which you do not do.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 61, verses 2–3)

Our failure to set examples by making our words and actions go together is seriously damaging the image of Islām in the eyes of non-Muslims. This widespread inconsistency is the main reason for the non-recognition of Islām as a practical and viable way of life by non-Muslims, who regard it as a legacy of the past with nothing to offer to the present-day world. We must take a careful look at ourselves and try to remove this impression. As long as we falter in recognising and remedying the inconsistencies between our words and deeds, we will not be taken seriously by any community, especially the materially advanced people of the West. More poignantly, we will be humiliated, marginalised and ignored. This is the state of over a billion Muslims all over the world. Unflinching faith in *Tawhīd*, *Risālah* and *Ākhirah* combined with action (*ʿAmal*) will save us from this humiliation. The need is for voluntary, conscious and complete submission to the Creator's wishes with unwavering faith. Success is then guaranteed by the Creator, Who never fails in His promise.

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

So do not become weak, nor be sad,
and you will be superior if you are indeed believers.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 139)

رَبَّنَا وَءَاثِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا

عَلَى رَسُولِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

"Our Lord! Grant us what You promised us through Your messengers,
and do not disgrace us on the Day of resurrection.

Indeed, you never break (Your) promise."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 194)

...لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ

وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ وَلَنِعْمَ دَارُ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

... For those who do good in this world, there is good,
and the home of the Hereafter will be better.

And excellent indeed will be the home of the righteous.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 16, verse 30)

...وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

... "Fear not, nor grieve!

But receive the glad tidings of Paradise which you have been promised!"

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 41, verse 30)

Doubt or scepticism about these basic concepts, which have been explained by the messengers of Allāh, produces disbelief, confusion and uncertainty in man. The sceptics do a great disservice to any society, thus contributing to social instability and disquiet. They debase the status of man—the Khalīfah of Allāh on the earth.

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ
لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ
بِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

And surely, We have created for Hell many of the jinns and mankind.

They have hearts with which they do not understand,

they have eyes with which they do not see,

and they have ears with which they do not hear.

They are like cattle; rather, they are more astray.

It is they who are the heedless.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 7, verse 179)

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ﴿٥﴾

We have certainly created man in the best stature;

Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 95, verse 4-5)

The unlettered prophet of Islām, Muḥammad ﷺ, by embodying his words in his deeds, transformed Arab society to bring about a civilisation unequalled before or since, ensuring social welfare. Islāmic history is replete with the wonders brought about by his example. Muslims today are far away from the high standards of faith and action of their great predecessors. Individually and collectively we should build a close and solid bond of love, awe and devotion with our Creator by combining our pronouncements with our practice. All of Allah's messengers actually practised what they propagated; only when we emulate that example will our success be guaranteed.

➤ Basis of Islāmic Education ◀

The purest and the surest source of knowledge is the Creator, Who sent down His message for His agents through His selected messengers, by the means of *Wahī* (Revelation). The archangel *Jibrā'il* (Gabriel) carried the final revelation in its pristine purity to the final messenger of Allāh, Muḥammad ﷺ. Angels are special creatures of Allāh created

from light (*Nūr*), with no free will; as such can only discharge the function assigned to them without freedom to do otherwise. *Wahī* is the basis of the highest and most perfect form of beneficial knowledge (*ʿIlm*) for mankind.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ
فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ

فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾

Say, "I am only a man like you,
to whom it has been **revealed** that your god is one God.
So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness,
and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord."
(al-Qur'ān, chapter 18, verse 110)

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَىٰ
أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ
وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦﴾

Say, "I am only a man like you,
to whom it has been **revealed** that your god is one God,
so take a straight path to Him, and seek His forgiveness."
And woe to those who associate others with Allāh.
(al-Qur'ān, chapter 41, verse 6)

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾
ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّىٰ ﴿٨﴾
فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَىٰ ﴿٩﴾ فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾

It is not but a revelation revealed.

He has been taught by one mighty in power (Gabriel)—
One of soundness. And he rose to (his) true form
While he was in the highest part of the horizon,
Then he approached and came closer,
And was at a distance of two bow lengths or nearer;
And he revealed to His Servant (Muhammad ﷺ) what he revealed.
(al-Qur'ān, chapter 53, verse 4–10)

الرَّحْمَنُ ﴿١﴾ عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ﴿٢﴾ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ﴿٣﴾
عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ﴿٤﴾

The Most Merciful!
Has taught the Qur'ān,
Created man,
Taught him eloquent speech.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 55, verse 1–4)

Accumulated human experience is a means of gaining knowledge, though such knowledge is neither pure nor always reliable. This empirical knowledge, though essential for education, must be examined carefully in the light of the knowledge received through *Wahī*.

Any contradiction between knowledge gained through human experience and knowledge based on *Wahī* must lead us to doubt the reliability of the former. Nevertheless, it could be studied, checked and verified against proven facts. All knowledge should lead man to the achievement of the greater and real purpose of life—*Riḍā'ullah* by careful compliance with the wishes of the Creator.

Islam encourages freedom of speech and expression, enquiry and thought, but within the limits of responsibility and accountability.

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أَوَلَمْ
تُؤْمِنْ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ
الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا
ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾

And (remember) when Abraham said,

"My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead."

He (Allāh) said, "Do you not believe?"

He (Abraham) said, "Yes, but (I ask) only that my heart may be satisfied."

He (Allāh) said, "Take four birds, then cause them to incline towards you.

Then (after slaughtering them) put on each hill a portion of them—

they will come (flying) to you in haste.

And know that Allāh is Exalted in Might, Wise."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 260)

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth,

and the alternation of night and day,

are indeed signs for men of understanding.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 190)

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمَنُ
وَهُمْ مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى
قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾

They who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—
those will have security, and they are the guided.

And that was Our (conclusive) argument
which We gave Abraham against his people.

We raise by degrees whom We will.

Indeed your Lord is Wise and Knowing.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 6, verses 82–83)

﴿١٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِنَهْتَدُوا
بِهَآ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

﴿١٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ
قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ
خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُّتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا
قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا
وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَبِهٍ ۚ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

And it is He Who has set the stars for you so that you may guide your course
with their help through the darkness of the land and the sea.

We have explained in detail Our signs for people who know.

And it is He Who has created you from a single person,
and has given you a place of residing and storage.

Indeed We have explained in detail Our Revelations
for people who understand.

It is He Who sends down rain from the sky,
and with it We bring forth vegetation of all kinds,
and out of it We bring forth green stalks,
from which We bring forth thick clustered grain.

And from the date-palm,
from its emerging fruit are clusters of dates hanging low and near,
and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates,
each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety and taste).

Look at their fruits when they begin to bear, and the ripeness thereof.
Indeed, in these things are signs for people who believe.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 6, verses 97–99)

إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ
اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦﴾

Indeed, in the alternation of the night and the day,
and in all that Allāh has created in the heavens and the earth,
are signs for those who fear Him.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 10, verse 6)

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

Say, "Travel through the land and see how (Allāh) began creation.

Then Allāh will produce the final creation.

Indeed, Allāh is able to do all things.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 29, verse 20)

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُورٍ ﴿٣١﴾

Do you not see that ships sail through the sea by the favour of Allāh,
that He may show you of His signs?

Indeed, in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 31, verse 31)

سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي
خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ
وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ اللَّيْلُ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ

فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا
ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّى
عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ
الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَآيَةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَخَلَقْنَا
لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

Glory be to Him, Who has created all the of that which the earth produces,
as well as of their own (human) kind, and of that which they know not.

And a sign for them is the night,
We remove from it the (light of) day,
so they are (left) in darkness.

And the Sun runs on its fixed course for a term appointed.
That is the decree of the Exalted in Might, the All-Knowing.

And the Moon, We have determined for it phases,
until it returns appearing like the old date stalk.

It is not allowable for the Sun to reach the Moon,
nor does the night overtake the day;
but each, in an orbit, is swimming.

And a sign for them is that We their forefathers in a laden ship.

And We created for them from the likes of it that which they ride.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 36, verses 36-42)

No civilisation can prosper if every individual is allowed to misuse and misdirect his
Allāh-given faculties to proliferate evil, indecency, falsehood or inflammatory ideas causing
deep psychological injury to others. Allāh's servants should safeguard all decent and
wholesome things, including freedom of thought and action within the limits set by the
Creator Himself.

Welcome efforts have been and are being made in various parts of the world by some
individuals, organisations and Muslim governments to Islāmise the system of education.

A concerted attempt to Islāmise the body of knowledge is being conducted under the auspices of the International Institute of Islāmic Thought (IIIT), USA. This effort is particularly laudable, as it is a very basic task without which Islāmisation of education will not be possible. The International Islāmic University of Malaysia has been the main focus of the efforts of the IIIT. Other Islāmic universities, including the Islāmic University in Islāmabad, Pakistan, are also contributing to the Islāmisation of knowledge, but the Islāmic system of education we are discussing still seems to be far from a reality.

➤ Objectives of Islāmic Education ◀

Once *Wahī*-based knowledge is accepted and acknowledged as the only pure and infallible source of knowledge, and accumulated human experience is regarded as important but fallible and mutable, then the basis of education through which knowledge is imparted is firmly established. The objectives of the Islāmic education system could be summarised as:

1. Prepare and train the future generation to work as agents of Allāh on Earth.
2. Ensure the promotion of *Ma'rūf* (good) and the prevention of *Munkar* (evil) in a society.
3. Ensure the balanced growth of the total personality of a person.
4. Promote spiritual, moral, cultural, physical, mental and material development in children in preparation for the responsibilities, experiences and opportunities of adult life.²
5. Develop all the faculties to realise the full potential of people.
6. Develop the skills required to enable people to face real-life situations with a clear consciousness about their responsibility and accountability in the *Ākhirah*.
7. Prepare people to work towards the economic and material growth of a society with a strong sense of the unity of the human race and ensure equitable distribution and proper use of wealth.
8. Develop a sense of social responsibility for the efficient use of resources to eliminate wastage, avoid ecological damage, and safeguard the well-being of all created beings.
9. Encourage competition in good things to promote excellence and the highest achievements for the greater welfare of people and society.
10. Ensure that children grow up with a strong belief in sharing opportunities, equity, justice, fair play, love, care, affection, selflessness, honesty, humility, integrity and austerity.
11. Cater for the needs of all sections of a society, i.e. people of every race, colour, sex and religion.

Islāmic education should focus on Islām as the complete system of life, the conclusion of the religion for mankind that began with Ādam (the first man and the prophet of the Creator), and culminated with Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ—the final messenger of the Creator for the whole of mankind. Islām, the last of the revealed religions, embodies

axiomatic truths of its precursors (e.g. Judaism, Christianity). The Islāmic world-view does not contradict, rather it complements the view held by the other Abrahamic faiths. Islām can be considered to be the convergence point that upholds the truths and beauty of all revealed religions. Islām represents the completion of the favour of Allāh for Mankind. The Islāmic way of life is Allāh's chosen way.

...الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتِمَمْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا...

... This day I have perfected your religion for you,
completed My favour upon you,
and have chosen for you Islām as your religion....

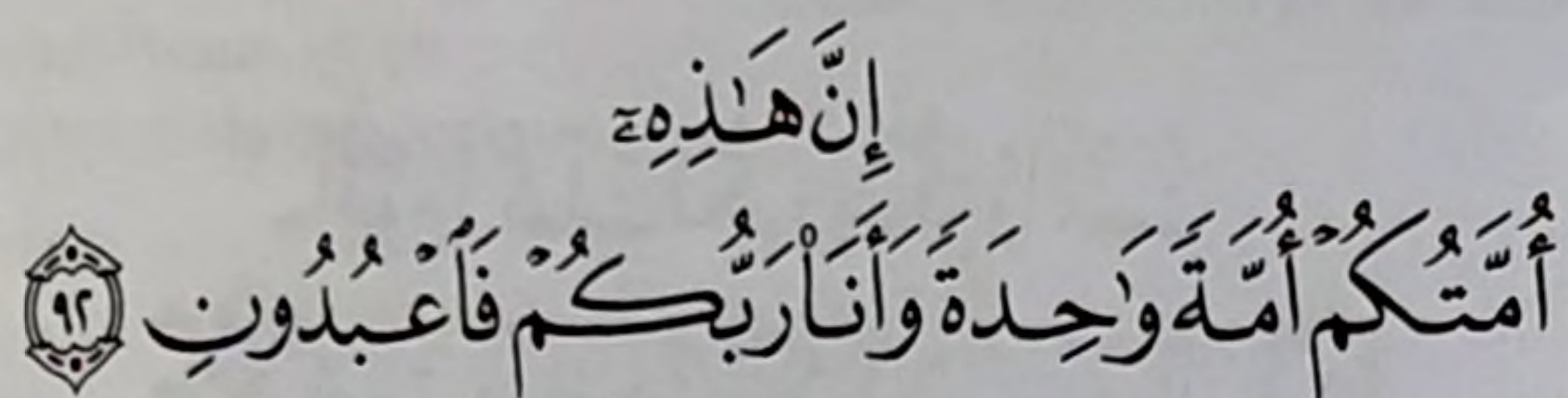
(al-Qur'ān, chapter 5, verse 3)

The Western view of life has been influenced by the thoughts and ideas of philosophers and theologians like Socrates (469–399 BC), Plato (428–348 BC), Aristotle (384–322 BC), St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE). The medieval and modern Western thinkers and philosophers include Alighieri Dante (1265–1321 CE), Copernicus (1473–1543 CE), Francis Bacon (1561–1626 CE), René Descartes (1596–1650 CE), John Locke (1632–1704 CE), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716 CE), Voltaire (1694–1778 CE), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778 CE), Immanuel Kant (1724–1804 CE), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832 CE), Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831 CE), Auguste Comte (1798–1857 CE), John Stuart Mill (1806–1873 CE), Charles Darwin (1809–1882 CE), Karl Marx (1818–1883 CE), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900 CE), Sigmund Freud (1856–1939 CE), Bertrand Russell (1872–1970 CE), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980 CE) and others. Most of the modern philosophers and sociologists, including René Descartes and Auguste Comte, accept only modern scientific knowledge as truth, and discard any metaphysical concept not compatible with and experimentable by human senses. Man is considered as just another part of nature. Transcendent reality or anything ontological is not acceptable. This leads to atheism or agnosticism, as it does not recognise or is sceptical about the existence of the Unique, Everlasting, All-Powerful Creator. Western philosophy focuses on individualism (freedom and liberty of individuals to attain the best of what they want). Islām, however, presents a world-view and a life stance based on total submission to the Creator and the welfare of all peoples of the world. This global view of Islām is paramount and should be reflected in its educational philosophy.

Unbridled use of reason and experiments to reach conclusions on matters beyond human intellect should be abandoned in favour of divine guidance. Whilst the tremendous contribution of the West to the development of knowledge should be acknowledged and credited, at the same time its science, technology, philosophy, politics and economics

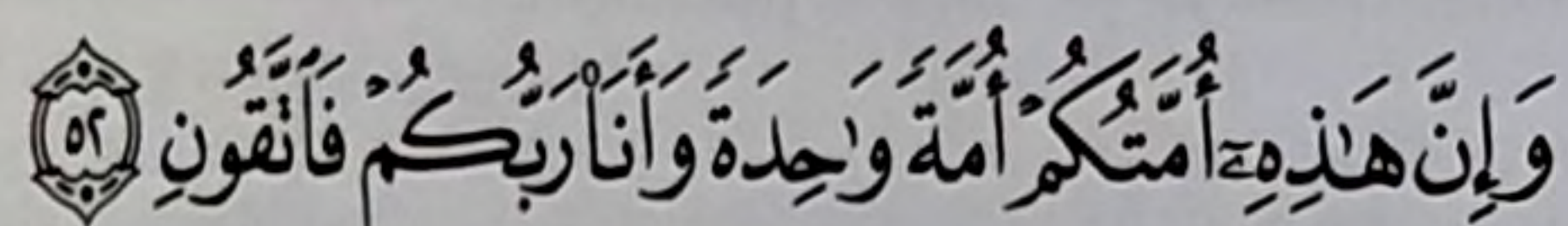
should be reviewed objectively by Muslim scholars to use them selectively and creatively for the benefit of humankind.

Islām upholds the view that the world and the people in it represent a unity both in origin and purpose.



Indeed this, your religion, is one religion,
and I am your Lord, so worship Me.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 21, verse 92)



And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood,
and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore fear Me (and no other).

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 23, verse 52)

Despite their diversity in colour, race, language, religious beliefs and traditions, Islāmic education would emphasise that human beings have a common origin and a common destiny.

An Islāmic education system would recognise the different needs of people living in parts of the world with marked variation in climate and circumstances. The unity of origin and goal would be highlighted by the recognition of diversity of circumstances but not of faith. Faith in the transcendent Creator will remain central and unalterable.

→ Some Practical Steps in the Introduction of an Islāmic Education System ←

Having dealt with the basic principles and objectives, and clarified the usefulness and importance of an Islāmic system of education, it is now essential to look at the practical aspects of a whole range of issues involving curriculum, syllabuses, text books and other educational resources, teacher training, meeting the diverse needs of disparate geographical territories, and the feasibility of implementing such a system globally.

A prerequisite to this programme is the recognition of the need for such an education system by the political leadership of a society. Education, in the societal context, is a political initiative. The political leadership should recognise and accept the need both in theory and in its practical implications.

1. **Plan:** A phased plan of action will take into account: goals and targets, timescale, provision of resources (human and material), monitoring, implementation, and measurement of success.
2. **Infrastructure:** The present systems and procedures, buildings and premises (those with value-free architecture) will be maintained but brought into line to reflect Islām's world-view and its unalterable stance of *Khalīfatullāh* and obedience (*'Ubdīyah*) to the Creator. Essential changes to infrastructure will be made, namely facilitating the observance of Islāmic duties by the construction of additional mosques and provision of places of worship and other amenities for non-Muslims (in Muslim countries) in educational institutions.
3. **Ending bifurcation:** Most Muslim countries have a dichotomy in the education system between religious and secular educational institutions. The products of modern secular institutions predominate at every level of the materialistic society, whereas those of religious institutions remain outside the mainstream of society, catering only for some religious and spiritual needs. The present religious education system is flawed and falls short of the needs of an age of science and technology. Rather than becoming centres of excellence for both worlds (this world and the next), they have been reduced to an irrelevance in the race for material advancement. It is curious to note that in several Muslim countries Islāmic universities exist separately from secular universities.

The modern secular system of education and religious seminaries, including the Islāmic universities, would be merged into an integrated system, to make an all-encompassing Islāmic education system.

4. **Curriculum:** All beneficial knowledge not against belief in the Creator will continue to be taught and applied. Existing curricula, syllabuses, text books and teaching resources will be critically examined and revised to reflect the Islāmic view of human beings and the world based on the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. A broad-based curriculum, recognising diversity in location and needs, should be prepared by a team of experts with clarity of purpose, commitment, and complete *Tawakkul* (reliance) on Allāh for the success of the project. The curriculum will be based primarily on revealed knowledge and secondarily on acquired knowledge.
5. **Syllabuses:** Detailed syllabuses should be prepared for each subject or area of a discipline by a team of suitable experts for:
 - (a) Revealed knowledge—study of the Qur'ān (reading, memorisation, understanding, application and hermeneutics); study of the Sunnah (collection, transmission, authenticity, categorisation and application, etc.); study of the *Sīrah*; study of Islāmic *Sharī'ah*, *Fiqh* and *Uṣūl al Fiqh*; study of Qur'ānic Arabic;
 - (b) Acquired knowledge—Humanities, Linguistics, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Medical Sciences, Technology and others.

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Islām upholds the view that the world and the people in it represent a unity both in origin and purpose.

إِنَّ هَذِهِ
أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٩٢﴾

Indeed this, your religion, is one religion,
and I am your Lord, so worship Me.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 21, verse 92)

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٥٢﴾

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 - (b) Acquired knowledge—Humanities, Linguistics, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Medical Sciences, Technology and others.

6. **Text Books:** Text books on subjects and disciplines mentioned in (b) above must be examined by experts in those subjects. Any books whose contents are against the principles of Islām should be revised, discarded or replaced. This is a stupendous task, but an absolute necessity for the successful implementation of the Islāmic education system. The need has already been recognised by some Islāmic educationists and scholars, and appreciable ground work has already been done by, amongst others, the IIIT.

New text books should be written on selected areas of acquired knowledge by scholars of exceptional ability; they should reflect creativity, originality and advancement to faith-laden human knowledge to make Islāmic education a success for all mankind. No task is insurmountable if there is faith in Allāh. Believers and those who work for Allāh's pleasure are successful.

وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

*So do not become weak, nor be sad,
and you will be superior if you are indeed believers.*

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 139)

... فَإِنَّ حَرْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

... then the the party of Allāh will be the victorious.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 5, verse 56)

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾

Successful indeed are the believers.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 23, verse 1)

وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

إِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ الْمَنْصُورُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

وَإِنَّ جُنَدَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾

And Our Word has already preceded for Our servants, the messengers,

(That) indeed, they would be those given victory,

And indeed, Our soldiers will be those who overcome.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 37, verse 171-173)

Muslim exegetes, jurists, sociologists, theologians, mathematicians, philosophers and historians have produced great works on areas of revealed knowledge and human enquiry. They include: 'Abdullāh bin Ma'sūd (d. 653 CE), 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās (d. 688 CE), 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar (d. 693 CE), Imām Ja'far aṣ-Ṣādiq (d. 765 CE), Imām Abu Hanīfa (d. 767 CE), Ibn Ishāq (d. 767 CE), Imām Abū Yūsuf (d. 795 CE), Imām Mālik (d. 795 CE), Jabir bin Ḥaiyān (d. 815 CE), Imām ash-Shāfi'ī (d. 820 CE), Ibn Hishām (d. 834 CE), Ibn Sa'd (d. 845 CE), al-Khawārizmī (d. 850 CE), Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 855 CE), Imām Bukhārī (d. 870), al-Kindī (d. 870 CE), Imām Muslim (d. 875 CE), Ibn Mājah (d. 886 CE), Abū Dāwūd (d. 888), at-Tirmidhī (d. 892 CE), an-Nasā'ī (d. 915 CE), Ibn Jarir at-Ṭabarī (d. 923 CE), al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956 CE), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna, d. 1037 CE), Ibn al-Ḥaithām (al-Hazen, d. 1040 CE), al-Birūnī (d. 1051 CE), Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064 CE), at-Ṭūsī (d. 1067 CE), Imām al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 CE), al-Zamakhsharī (1144 CE), Ibn Rushd (Averroes, d. 1198 CE), Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 1200 CE), Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240 CE), al-Qurṭubī (d. 1273 CE), Ibn Taimīyah (d. 1328 CE), Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373 CE), Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406 CE), Jalaluddīn as-Suyūṭī (d. 1505 CE), Shah Walī Allāh (d. 1762 CE), Muḥammad bin 'Abdul Wahhāb (d. 1791 CE), Muḥammad Iqbal (d. 1938 CE), Ḥasan al-Banna (d. 1949 CE), Saiyid Qutb (d. 1966 CE), Saiyid Abul A'lā Mawdūdī (d. 1979 CE), Ismā'īl Rāji al-Fārūqī (d. 1986 CE), and many others. Their admirable works should be built on, leading to further research into and the application of revealed knowledge, guiding and directing the course of acquired knowledge, and addressing contemporary issues.

7. **Teacher Training:** The pivotal importance of teachers in Islāmic education must be acknowledged; indeed, all messengers and prophets were essentially teachers. The teacher is the transmitter of knowledge – revealed and unrevealed. He is the embodiment of the message. He represents the practical manifestation of the knowledge contained in the message. 'Ilm (knowledge) and 'Amal (practice) must be combined. One without the other is a tree without fruits. The message needs to be applied so its benefits can be appreciated by those for whom it is intended. The Dīn (way) of Allāh (Islām) in its pristine purity has to be established in its totality—so declares the Qur'ān, the final revealed book of the Creator.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ
عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

*It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth,
to make it superior over all religions, even though the pagans hate (it).*

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 9, verse 33)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ

الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

He it is Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth,
that He may make it superior over all religions.
And sufficient is Allāh as Witness.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 48, verse 28)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ

عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩﴾

It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth,
to make it superior over all religions, even though the pagans hate (it).

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 61, verse 9)

This responsibility has to be accomplished by Islāmic teachers when they transmit revealed knowledge and empirical knowledge.

The teachers by their superb example of *Taqwā* (piety, or consciousness of Allāh) embodying the highest state of faith, *Ihsān*, will motivate and inspire their students to continue the propagation of the message of Allāh.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ

شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

O mankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female,
and made you peoples and tribes,
that you may know one another.

Indeed the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh
is the most righteous of you.

Indeed, Allāh is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 49, verse 13)

Teachers must be trained by people having *Taqwā* and exemplary knowledge and practice of Islām. Although they may be few and far between, some such people are available. Our duty is to find them and to benefit from them.

8. **Stages of Education:** Every stage of education, e.g. nursery, primary (elementary), secondary, higher (vocational and university) should be planned in an Islāmic system.

Setting up a few institutions of a certain level in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries (say, nursery, primary or secondary) is undoubtedly a bold step in the right direction, but must be seen in the overall context of the whole education system—its purpose, usefulness and eventual success in preparing children as *Khilafatullah* (agents of Allāh) in an age of science, technology, competition and excellence. Competition and excellence *per se* must not be seen as ends in themselves, but rather considered within the remit of *Khilāfah* and *Riḍā'ullah*.

9. **Arabic:** This should be the *lingua franca* of Islāmic education. It is the language of the Qur'ān, which contains entirely the words of the transcendent Creator, Allāh. It is the main language spoken in over twenty countries, and is used by Muslims across the world, especially in their *Ṣalāh* (obligatory daily prayers). All Muslims should learn to recite, read and understand the Qur'ān. The recasting of acquired knowledge on the basis of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah will be impossible without thorough knowledge of classical and modern Arabic. Teaching Arabic as a language must be an integral part of the curriculum of an Islāmic education system.

10. **Private and State support:** The system, whilst encouraging private initiatives and support, will depend principally on the State. Provision of Islāmic education has to be the main priority of Muslim governments.

11. **Needs of women:** Women constitute over half of the human race, and their needs should be properly looked after, in keeping with their status and role as defined by Islām. They should be able to play their part as the agents of Allāh in the society in which they live.

12. **Needs of non-Muslims:** An Islāmic education system ought to address the needs of non-Muslims (in Muslim countries); arrangements should be made to meet their special needs.

13. **Muslim minorities:** In countries where Muslims are in a minority, the introduction of an Islāmic education system would be difficult until a suitable model is available. Until a model Islāmic education system comes into existence, the responsibility of providing Islāmic education to children will continue to lie with Muslim parents. The Qur'ān exhorts Muslims to save themselves and their families from Hell.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ

نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ... ﴿٦﴾

O you who believe!

Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire
whose fuel is people and stones...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 66, verse 6)

Muslims in non-Muslim societies are required to act as role models by being living examples of Islām, making a positive impression on the non-Muslim majority so that they can witness the beauty and efficacy of the Islāmic way of life.

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا
شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا... ﴿١٤٣﴾

Thus We have made you a just community,
that you will be witnesses over mankind,
and the Messenger will be a witness over you...

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 2, verse 143)

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

And let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good,
enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong;
and those will be the successful.

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 104)

→ Conclusion ←

Islāmic education will not merely reform a human being, rather it will bring about the total transformation of his personality. The metamorphosis of the individual through Islāmic education will be total and complete. The slave Bilāl and prospective killer 'Umar were transformed into outstanding personalities and heroes par excellence. Perpetrators of horrific acts are less likely to emerge from an Islāmic education system. That could only be possible with the decline of the system. Rather than cosmetic or superficial change, the Islāmic system will ensure the total development of children's personalities so that they grow into shining examples of honesty, integrity, intellect and consistent conduct. The change that will be brought about in an Islāmic system will be self-evident (for all to see)—there would be genuine felicity and happiness in the society.

Islāmic education and a global Islāmic revival are inextricably connected. This revival should not be seen as a threat of a clash between civilisations³, of 'the next war', a perpetual confrontation⁴; rather, it should be welcomed as the harbinger of hope, understanding and of success to ensure greater human welfare. We are in the twenty-first

century, with the scope for vastly better access to information which could remove age-old prejudice, ignorance and Islāmophobia. The memories of the crusades, fanaticism and bigotry should be laid to rest but not forgotten and a new beginning made. Rather than unfairly branding Islām and Muslims as intolerant and terrorists, an era of understanding and willingness to see the truth and the ultimate reality of a supreme, all-powerful Creator's flawless and unmatched excellent system in action, which must ensure justice and happiness for all the people of the world. Islāmic education should be the precursor of this universal revival based on belief in the uniqueness of the Creator, His universal final message for mankind sent through His final messenger Muḥammad ﷺ, and the certainty of our death and life after death. All human beings have a common origin, a common purpose, and a common Creator—Allāh (God).

قُلْ يٰٓأَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ
أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا
بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا

مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

Say, "O People of the Scripture!

Come to a word that is equitable between us and you—

that we worship none but Allāh,

and that we associate no partners with Him,

and that none of us shall take others as Lords besides Allāh."

Then, if they turn away, say,

"Bear witness that we are Muslims (submitting to Him)."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 64)

وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٥٢﴾

And verily this Brotherhood of yours is a single Brotherhood,
and I am your Lord and Cherisher, therefore fear Me (and no other).

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 23, verse 52)

Muslims, numbering over a billion across the world, owe it to themselves and to the rest of mankind to demonstrate convincingly that the Islāmic education system is the only way forward for all the people of the world. I hope that with total reliance on Allāh

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⇒ Note ⇐

This book is an updated version of the essay published in 1996 by the Muslim Educational Trust in its publication 'Issues in Islāmic Education'. The most significant addition is the 15-page foreword.

and faith in His mercy and blessings, efforts to establish the Islāmic system of education for the benefit of all mankind will, *inshā'Allāh*, lead to real success. I further hope that this humble treatise will motivate others with similar thoughts to work towards the achievement of this noble goal.

I have, with heavy heart, often observed that many of us who are educated in the Westernized secular education system take great care to justify the relevance of Islām and the greatness of Allāh's last and final messenger, Muḥammad ﷺ, by quoting Western thinkers, philosophers and scientists, some of whom wrote approvingly or positively about Islām and Muḥammad ﷺ—but never entered into the bliss of Islām. I consider Allāh's approval and pronouncements are more than enough for us and we need no human's certificate to believe, understand and practise Islām based on the excellent example of Muḥammad ﷺ, the greatest teacher for all mankind until the end of the world.

Success can only come from Allāh. Indeed Allāh loves those who put their trust in Him. And our duty is only to deliver the clear message.

... وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ ﴿٨٨﴾

... and my success cannot come except from Allāh,
in Him I trust, and to Him I repent."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 11, verse 88)

... فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

... Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allāh.
Indeed, Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him).

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 3, verse 159)

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٧﴾

"And our duty is only to convey plainly (the Message)."

(al-Qur'ān, chapter 36, verse 17)

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Ghulam Sarwar is the Director of the Muslim Educational Trust. He was awarded a first degree in Commerce and a masters in Business Management by the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. He taught Business Management to undergraduates, and since the early sixties he has devoted himself to Islāmic da'wah and revival work. His written works include: *Islām: Beliefs and Teachings*, *Islām for Younger People*, *The Beginner's Book of Ṣalāh*, *Syllabus & Guidelines for Islāmic Teaching*, *Sex Education - The Muslim Perspective* and *British Muslims and Schools*.

The Muslim Educational Trust is the pioneering educational organisation established in 1966 to cater for the Islāmic educational needs of Muslim pupils in British schools. Its activities include sending Islāmic studies teachers to selected schools; advising the Muslim community on their educational needs; advising the Department for Education and Skills, local education authorities, schools, educationists and teachers on matters concerning Muslims; the preparation and publication of Islāmic books and teaching aids in English; and the promotion of a better understanding of Islām among all sections of British society.